

The Indiana Department of Correction Enhances Juvenile Care with New Division of Youth Services

Indianapolis, IN (May 26, 2009) – Today, Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) Commissioner Edwin G. Buss announced new initiatives in regard to the care of delinquent juveniles in Indiana with the creation of the Division of Youth Services (DYS).

The DHS will oversee all aspects of IDOC juvenile care and adopt the Balanced and Restorative Justice Model to serve as the foundation and core beliefs in providing the overarching, guiding principle for facility operations, treatment programs, youth development, and community re-entry. The model includes all parties as a part of the response to the juvenile's crime, including the victim, the community, and the juvenile offender. The model also includes accountability for the juvenile offender, which means accepting responsibility and acting to repair the harm done. All in all, repairing the harm and rebuilding relationships in the community is the primary goal of restorative juvenile justice. Through the DHS, juvenile justice professionals will organize and support processes in which individual crime victims, other community members, and juvenile offenders are involved in finding constructive resolutions to delinquency.

To brand the new division, the DHS now has specific vision and mission statements and has a new division seal displaying the core principles Accountability, Beliefs, and Commitment. The DHS vision is to positively impact the future of Indiana's delinquent youth to foster responsible citizenship, and its mission is community protection, accountability, beliefs that foster responsible community living and competency development. Also, the DHS now has its own website, located at <http://www.in.gov/idoc/dys> which gives an overview of the division's structure and presents comprehensive information on the juvenile facilities and programs.

Additionally, the DHS is reviewing policy revisions that will give committing counties the opportunity to re-assume jurisdiction over these youths prior to release. When a youth is discharged from IDOC, all efforts will be taken to not have the juvenile returned to the IDOC simply because there is nowhere for he or she to go. The IDOC and DHS will continually work with the counties and the Department of Child Services to identify services and appropriate community programs.

With the new division comes new leadership. Michael Dempsey was recently appointed by IDOC Commissioner Buss as the Executive Director for the Division of Youth Services. Dempsey has an expansive career in juvenile corrections and was most recently Superintendent at the Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Administration and Criminal Justice and has been actively involved with the American Correctional Association (ACA) as a member and certified auditor. He has also been involved with the Counsel of Juvenile Correctional Administrators.

IDOC Commissioner Buss expressed his commitment and excitement for the DHS by saying, "Through this renewed effort to best provide juvenile justice services in Indiana, we can improve lives and reduce juvenile and adult recidivism rates. The DHS will be dedicated to providing appropriate care and treatment for youth in secure confinement and ensuring that these youths have successful re-entry upon their release."

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